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ABSTRACT

The New Voice of Resistance in Palestinian Hip-Hop: DAM and the Representation of Arab Women

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This study aimed to find the effect of the specific language varieties used by the Palestinian hip-hop group DAM on the ways that feminist themes of honor killing, the objectifying of women, and the categorizing and marginalizing of Arab women are represented in songs. The research techniques involved inspecting and finding the feminist themes presented in five songs performed by DAM as well as analyzing the effect of language use on those themes. Among the five is one unreleased song that we heard in a concert and obtained permission to include it in our study. In addition, the researchers applied Tyson's (2006) discussion of feminism to examine the themes of the songs. The researchers found that DAM uses multiple languages and language varieties including the Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), Colloquial Arabic (CA), and Hebrew as well as words borrowed from the English and Hebrew languages. DAM exploits these languages to communicate cultural issues and social critique in subtle ways to a wide audience, simultaneously local and international. For example, their use of particular MSA words heightens the seriousness of their topics while their use of CA words, marked as very local and very informal, reminds Palestinian listeners that the problems being discussed are part of their national culture, a part that Palestinians can change. Our goal in choosing this topic was to examine the representation of Arab women through the lens of Palestinian hip hop written and performed mainly by feminist Arab men although, importantly, female performers are involved as well.

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